

REMARKS

After entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1, 2, 4 and 7-12 are pending in this application. Via the foregoing amendments, claims 5 and 6 are cancelled, and their recitations incorporated into claim 1. Claim 3 was previously cancelled, and claims 9-12 were previously withdrawn. Claims 1, 2 and 4-8 are rejected.

In view of the indicated allowable subject matter in paragraph 6 of the Office Action, the foregoing amendments and the Terminal Disclaimer submitted herewith are believed to put this application in condition for allowance.

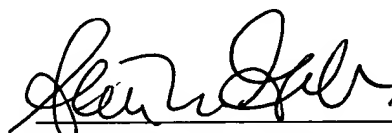
STATEMENT OF COMMON OWNERSHIP

As the Examiner indicates, the co-pending application No. 09/853,674 and the subject application were commonly owned (by Bridgestone Corporation) at the time the invention in the subject application was made.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue that the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, she is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number listed below.

Appropriate documents and fees for a one-month Extension of Time and a Terminal Disclaimer are appended hereto. The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all additional required fees (except the Issue/Publication Fees) to our Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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